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Gold King Mine Release

Water Treatment Contract Q&As

September 23, 2015

How much will it cost?

The interim water subcontract for treatment will cost about $1.78 million to mobilize and install and about $20,000/week to operate. Other costs include demobilization and bonding totaling $53,200.

How long will you operate it?

At this time we project the treatment system will operate for 42 weeks. EPA will have the option to start or stop treatment as needed.

How are you paying for it?

EPA is using our Superfund removal appropriations to pay for this work.

Why are you treating the GKM discharge?

EPA has decided that treating the GKM discharge is the responsible action at this time. We will be continuing work on the GKM mine next year and will need the ability to treat discharges as we we develop and implement plans for working in the mine.

Will you operate it forever?

No, this system is temporary and we will be treating water while we are working at the GKM. Long term treatment will need to be decided after a more detailed evaluation of mine discharge sources in the Upper Animas watershed.

How effective will it be at treating?

The specifications in the RFP is for an 85% removal rate of metals from the mine discharge. Actual treatment effectiveness will be monitored and adjusted as the plant is operated. The discharge will result in reduced loading to Cement Creek.

Are you going to get an NPDES permit?

No, CERCLA actions by statute are exempt from administrative requirements for obtaining a discharge permit.

Are you going to treat other mine discharges?

No. This temporary treatment system is for the Gold King Mine discharge only.

Will you be treating Cement Creek?
No. This temporary treatment system does not have the capacity to treat the entire Cement Creek water flow.

What are your long-term goals for the GKM?

EPA, in consultation with the state and ARSG, are opening up the mine so we can monitor any impacts from when the bulkhead is shut in the Red and Bonita mine. We will also be evaluating water flows into the GKM and ways to manage the discharge from the mine.